

L208 *LYCAENA PHLAEAS* L.—On 7th November 1970 I observed for several minutes a small copper butterfly enjoying the afternoon sunshine on a south-facing slope above the sea at Polruan, Cornwall. The specimen looked very fresh as it fluttered among the bushes, and finally settled on a bramble leaf with wings outspread, almost under my nose. I could easily have captured it but did not do so. It would be interesting to know whether this very late individual was a straggler from the usual October emergence or whether it was the offspring of the October butterflies which, for some reason, forgot to hibernate and completed its growth abnormally quickly for the time of year.—JOHN L. GREGORY, Lepidoptera House, 17 Grove Road, St Austell, Cornwall. 17.xi.1970.

ANTITYPE *XANTHOMISTA* GREGSON IN IRELAND.—I spent a short time collecting in south west Ireland this October. On 11th October I had a Robinson mercury vapour light trap in the Castle grounds at Castletownshend which is on the sea in the extreme south west corner of County Cork. The night was calm and warm and there were a lot of insects in the trap next morning. The commonest was *Aporophyla nigra* Haw. with about one hundred specimens. There were also three *Leucania unipuncta* Haw., which is almost certainly a resident in this very mild area, and one *Antitype xanthomista* Gregson. According to Baynes, this is the first Irish record, and it is surprising that *xanthomista* should not have turned up in Ireland before, in view of its presence on the facing and very similar coasts of North Cornwall and Pembroke. It is a poor specimen and I am unable to say whether it differs in any degree from the English form.—R. P. DEMUTH, Watercombe House, Oakridge, Stroud, Glos. 4.xii.1970.

WORK OF A NEW FOREST SPIDER.—During a night's bug hunting in the New Forest in July, the remarkable efficiency of the spider was brought home to us. We had arrived about 9 p.m., and, before deciding where to set up our light and sheet, we explored a ride which led in from the main road. Three of us walked abreast the entire length of it.

About 1.30 a.m. things began to get slack in the spot we had adopted, so I decided to try the car headlights along the side ride. As soon as the beam was in position I noticed about ten yards away a large spider's web, quite perfect with a big spider in the centre awaiting customers.

The diameter of the web was about 10". It was 3 feet from the ground, right in the middle of the path, and at first glance it appeared to be quite unsupported. Curiosity forced us to investigate and we found one supporting strand leading directly to a pine branch 12 feet away on the far side of a deep ditch and 8 feet up. On the other side the upper stay led to the top of a tall thistle 8 feet away. The lower stays were not quite so long, but the whole structure entirely blocked the ride.

This stupendous achievement by a single spider had been completed in less than four hours. Can anybody tell us how it was done?—B. W. WEDDELL, 39 Victoria Road, Trowbridge, Wilts. 3.xii.1970.